

**Written Testimony of Sue Harkness of Conversations for a Green Connecticut, Before the
Connecticut General Assembly Environment Committee, March 1, 2010.**

Testimony in Support of:

**House Bill 5126, An Act Establishing a Chemical Innovations Institute at the University of
Connecticut;**

House Bill 5130, An Act Concerning Child Safe Products

Dear Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and honorable members of the Environment Committee:

My name is Sue Harkness and I am a member of Conversations for a Green CT, a group based in Ashford that is concerned about environmental issues and brings more awareness of these issues to the public through programs and activities.

I am writing because I strongly support HB 5126 An Act Establishing a Chemical Innovations Institute at the University of Connecticut and HB 5130 An Act Concerning Child Safe Products. I am concerned about this issue as all folks should be if they value their health and the health of everybody else, especially young children. Most of us do not have the knowledge necessary to know everything about these dangerous chemicals, and an Institute such as the one mentioned above would be the scientific and academic component that is so necessary, in addition to all of the other economic opportunities.

Many studies have linked toxins to diseases such as cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's as well as asthma, infertility and learning disabilities. Young children and developing fetuses are especially vulnerable; exposure to even a small amount can affect a child for life. Connecticut has been a national leader by phasing out lead, mercury and BPA but we cannot continue to play toxic chemical "whac-a-mole" with our children's health. Please pass **HB 5130** to establish a comprehensive approach to phase out of chemicals of high concern from children's products. Parents should not have to wonder whether common household products, like bedding, toys or food can linings, are damaging their children's futures!

The European Union is in the process of phasing out hundreds of chemicals of high concern as part of their REACH legislation. Many countries are following the lead of the EU, including China, and U.S. manufacturers will have to find and use safer alternatives in order to stay competitive in the world market. A Chemical Innovations Institute, as established in **HB 5126**, would help Connecticut to lead in manufacturing products that families can trust. It is an economic development opportunity for green jobs growth and will assure that CT products can be sold in the international market place. This will help our state businesses and the CT economy as a whole, as well as protecting workers and consumers from exposure to toxins.

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for their leadership in this area. Please make passing **HB5126** and **HB 5130** a priority this legislative session.

Very truly yours,

Sue Elizabeth Harkness
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